

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6469

As of February 11, 2016

Title: An act relating to requiring that cursive writing be taught in common schools.

Brief Description: Requiring that cursive writing be taught in common schools.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Litzow, Hasegawa, Conway, Bailey, Angel, Chase, Becker, Warnick, Padden and Braun.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/02/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Current state law requires all common schools to give instruction in handwriting. This law was last amended in 2013 when the Legislature passed a bill that amended statutes that were identified by the Code Reviser as using gender-specific terms and replaced those terms with gender-neutral terms. This resulted in "penmanship" being changed to "handwriting." The implementing rule adopted by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has not been updated and still requires school districts to provide instruction in penmanship. Neither penmanship nor handwriting is defined in the education title of the code.

Summary of Bill: Cursive writing is included within the term handwriting. When a school district board of directors reviews or adopts its English Language Arts curriculum, it must incorporate curricula to teach cursive writing.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Cursive writing has been taken out of the curriculum in some Washington schools. Many people do not know that this has happened. School districts interpret the law as not requiring cursive writing to be taught. Some teachers are teaching cursive writing because they feel it is their responsibility. Many important and historical documents are written in cursive, and learning how to read and write cursive holds generations together. Students should still be taught cursive even though they are learning keyboarding skills. Learning cursive is a problem solving effort.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Roach, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.